A

SERMON

Preached at the

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

OF THE

ETON-SCHOLARS,

At St. *Mary le Bow*, on *Decemb.* the *6.* 1681.

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ACTS 22. part of the 3d Verſe.

Yet brought up in this City at the feet of Gamaliel.

THe ſeveral Feaſts and Solemn Meetings which the *Jews*, a particular Society or Corporation of Men diſtinct from the reſt of the World, held unto the Lord, were inſtituted and appointed by God himſelf, either for a laſting Memorial of ſome great and remarkable Deliverance, or for a grateful acknowledgment of that extraordinary plenty of Temporal Bleſſing which they received from the open and munificent hand of the Divine Providence: Another Reaſon as we are told of the conſtant Celebration of thoſe Feſtivals in that place where God choſe to fix his Name, was, that the general appearance of all the Tribes no leſs than three times in the Year, might not only Combine them in the more ſtrict bands of Mutual Love and Friendſhip, but keep them up to the due and uniform obſervance of that publick Form of Worſhip which was eſtabliſht amongſt

them. The Feaſt of the Paſſover, was Ordained for a continual remembrance of their Miraculous Deliverance from their *Egyptian* Bondage, and the Feaſt of Harveſt and Ingathering was kept, that thereby they might have an opportunity unanimouſly to praiſe the large bounty of their Heavenly Benefactor, who had Bleſſed them in the City, and in the Field, in their Baskets and in their Store, giving them a more than ordinary increaſe above their Neighbours round about them. And in all theſe publick Teſtimonies of their Gratitude, in all theſe Annual demonſtrations of their joy, none were to appear empty before the Lord.

The occaſion, Dearly beloved Brethren, of our Solemn meeting together this day, of this Anniverſary Feaſt which we hold unto the Lord, hath, though not the ſame Divine Authority to warrant its Inſtitution, yet, the ſame Pious and Laudable ends to approve and commend its continuation. We are come (Moſt worthy School-fellows, by what other titles ſoever you may be dignified above, or diſtinguiſhed from one another) from diverſe parts of the Land, as the *Jews* to the Celebration of the Paſſover, to this great City, the Center and Metropolis of the Nation, to this our *Jeruſalem*, to offer up an unbloudy Sacrifice of Praiſe and Thanksgiving to our God for our happy

delive-

deliverance from the land of Darkneſs, from the heavy yoke of Barbariſm and Ignorance under which ſo many unfortunately labour, by the great advantages which we have by his goodneſs obtained of a free and ingenuous Education.

To Praiſe him with our mouths, whoſe lips he hath opened with the key of Knowledge, to rejoyce before him that our Lot fell to us in a good ground, that he vouchſafed to plant us not only in a Literal, but a more exalted Senſe, by the Water-ſprings, by the Rivulets of Knowledg, that we might bring forth the ſeveral Fruits of our proper Callings in our due time and ſeaſons: We are met together to Praiſe God for our Seed-time, and our Harveſt, for the Bleſſing which he gave to our firſt endeavours, by Crowning our tender Years with his goodneſs, and alſo for the Ingathering the fruits of our labours; for the Improvements we have made, and the Benefits we have reaped by being nurtured and brought up at that Royal foundation to which we did ſometime belong.

Neither in theſe our Meetings muſt we appear empty before the Lord; works of Piety and Charity ſhould go hand in hand and kiſs each other: This is the precious Ointment which no Feaſt ſhould lack, which perfumes the whole

whole Room, and extends likewiſe its Odor to thoſe which are at a great diſtance from us This is the way to Sanctifie our Feaſt, (for if the Firſt-fruits be holy, the lump is alſo holy) by making others who are in a worſe condition than our ſelves, by our kindneſs, in ſome meaſure partakers of that innocent mirth and freedom which are the natural reſult of ſuch loving and friendly entertainments.

And as theſe publick Meetings are (Subordinately to that great end I have already mentioned) deſigned to renew that Amity and Friendſhip, without which no condition of life is tolerable, which by long abſence, and variety of accidents hath for ſome time been interrupted, ſo likewiſe that I may finiſh the parallel our appearance in this place dedicated to Gods Service does teſtifie our unanimous conformity to thoſe moſt excellent rules of his publick Worſhip as they are by our wholſom Laws eſtabliſht and confirmed.

Neither is it without reaſon that we obſerve this Annual Solemnity for a grateful remembrance of thoſe many Bleſſings and Benefits we received under the Care and Tuition of thoſe who were appointed to be the Guides and Inſtructors of our Youth, ſeeing St. *Paul*, the Learned Apoſtle, in the Defence which he made for himſelf before his Brethren the *Jews*, takes

a particular occaſion to make an honourable mention of his Maſters Name, under whom he became ſo great a proficient in the Knowledge and Practiſe of the Law; telling them, that although he was Born in *Tarſus*, a City of *Cilicia*; and, as *Strabo* ſays, an Academy furniſhed with Schools of Learning; yet that he might the better compleat, and bring to perfection thoſe Studies which he had ſo happily begun, he Travelled to *Jeruſalem*, where the great Rabbies and Doctors of the Law reſided, and in that City was brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*; alluding to the Cuſtom of the *Jewiſh* Maſters, who were wont to ſit, whilſt their Diſciples and Scholars ſtood at their feet to receive thoſe Precepts of Wiſdom which thoſe Oracles of Knowledge delivered with a Gravity becoming their Years and Profeſſion.

Under the Tuition of this great Maſter was St. *Paul* Educated, and Inſtructed in the Knowledge of the Law, wherein he made ſuch vaſt improvements, having the Advantage of being previouſly well grounded in the firſt Principles and Elements of Learning, that he quickly outſtript his fellow-diſciples. And indeed as if his Tribe, the Tribe of *Benjamin* had Intituled him to a double ſhare, he ſeems, though Born out of time, to have had a larger portion of Knowledge than the reſt of the Apoſtles.

And

And truly it ſeemed but fit that this great Miniſter of the uncircumciſion, whom God choſe to bear his Name before the *Gentiles*, ſhould have an Education which might furniſh him with all thoſe uſeful parts of Learning that were requiſite for the accompliſhment of that important Work for which he was deſigned. He was to Diſpute with the Heathen Philoſophers, Men verſed in all the Learning of the Ancients, ſtudied in all the Sophiſms of the Schools; and therefore he was to be ſo prepared, as to be able to anſwer all thoſe Objections which they could raiſe againſt that new Doctrine, as they thought, which he ſhould deliver to them, to convince them by their own Arguments, and to turn their own Artillery upon themſelves. Hence St. *Hierome*, in an Epiſtle to *Magnus*, a *Roman* Orator, taking notice of that Innocent, but cunning Artifice that St. *Paul* made uſe of at his coming to *Athens*, when he took occaſion from an Inſcription which he met with upon one of their Altars, *To the unknown God*, to lead them to the knowledge of the true one, highly applauds the Skill and readineſs of his Argumentation. Behold, ſaith he, how this Invincible Orator pleading in the behalf of the Chriſtian Doctrine, turns the Inſcription which he ſeem'd caſually to light upon, on the *Athenians* themſelves, having learnt from the true *David* to wreſt the Weapon

out

out of the Enemies hand, and to cut off *Goliath*'s Head with his own Sword. And when this Learned Apoſtle would prove againſt the *Epicureans* that we were not the product of Chance, but of Divine Extraction, he refers them to their own Authors, to their own Poets, for whom they had a great Veneration, and amongſt whom the choiceſt Treaſures of Myſterious Knowledge were repoſited; citing a place out of *Aratus* to that purpoſe, τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν. And though at firſt he ſeemed to ſome of them no better than a Babler, yet by his ſolid Diſcourſes, and his rational Inferences, he gained ſo much upon them, that at his firſt Lecture he Converted one of their chief Doctors, *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*; and others there were of leſs note, who at the ſame time embraced that Doctrine which he then with ſo much power and ſtrength of Argument delivered unto them. His Eloquence was ſo perſwaſive, and his Reaſon ſo convincing, that it was hard to reſiſt either the Charms of the one, or the Force of the other: For though his Perſonage was mean, and almoſt contemptible, yet all acknowledged that his Words were powerful, and his Reaſonings irrefragable.

When he writes to his Church at *Corinth*, (to which Learned City every one was not fit to be ſent an Embaſſadour) how does he beſtir, and

lay about himself? What Elegant Tropes, and Figures of Speech, what easie Transitions, what vehemence of Expression, what kind and pathetical Insinuations, what gentle, and yet cogent Admonitions does he make use of? suitable to the nature of the Subject of which he treated, and the Persons to whom he directed his Discourse: So that *Beza*, in his Annotations upon the 11*th*. Chapter of his Second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, tells us, That having well weighed the several Ornaments and Elegancies of Speech diffused over that and others of his Epistles, he could not meet with the same height and grandeur of Expression, with the like smart and grave way of Reprehension; or with so attractive and winning a manner of Perswasion, either in *Plato* or *Demosthenes*, in *Aristotle* or *Galen*, though they were all great Masters and Professors of Eloquence. He that reads those Excellent and Eloquent Defences which he made in behalf of himself and his Doctrine, before *Felix* and King *Agrippa*, by the last of which, he almost perswaded his chiefest Auditor to become his Convert and Proselyte, will easily find what Improvements he made, and what benefits he received by virtue of his first Education in good Letters, by being brought up, as he tells us in my Text, in the City of *Jerusalem*, at the feet of the Learned and great Rabbi, *Gamaliel*.

In

In regard all the benefits and advantages of a free and ingenuous Education have been most excellently and fully in this place, and upon the same Occasion declared unto you; and that I may not build my Hay and Stubble upon that Foundation, on which so much Gold and Precious Stones have been already laid: I shall endeavour in my ensuing Discourse, taking the hint from St. *Paul*'s Institution, and the manner of it, to shew you,

1. That Humane Learning, a competent skill in Arts and Sciences, a Liberal Education in good Literature, are very necessary qualifications for all those who are dedicated to the Sacred Ministry, and thereby Authoriz'd to Interpret unto the People the Oracles of Divine Truth.

2. That a good Foundation in the Rudiments and Principles of Learning does fit and capacitate all Persons whatsoever for the well governing and improving themselves in those several Callings and Stations, to which the Divine Providence hath assigned them.

3. That Publick Schools and Seminaries are the best Nurseries for the training up of Youth in all those parts of Knowledge which may render them Useful and Serviceable in their several Capacities to the Common-wealth, or Society wherein they live.

And 4. I shall shew you how that Royal Foun-

dation, of which we were once Members, hath at leaſt equal Advantages with any other of the ſame kind, in order to the obtaining the fore-mentioned great End.

My firſt Propoſition was, that Humane Learning, an early Education in good Literature, are very uſeful and neceſſary Qualifications for all thoſe who are Dedicated to the Sacred Miniſtry, and thereby Commiſſionated to Interpret the Oracles of Divine Truth to the Congregation.

They are not improperly ſtiled the Hand-maids of Divinity, ſeeing they do very much facilitate our acceſs to that Divine Miſtreſs, the Cœleſtial Truth, which does not Proſtitute her Sacred Treaſures to Profane and Ignorant Intruders, but ſuffers her ſelf to be gain'd like Heaven it ſelf, whoſe Off-ſpring ſhe is, by the Violence and Importunate ſollicitations of thoſe Wiſe Charmers, whoſe force ſhe is neither able nor willing to withſtand. They are not indeed the Heaven, but they are the bright Stars that illuſtrate it; they are not the Crown, but they are the Orient Gems that embelliſh it; they are not the Ground-work, but they are the Rich Imbroidery that adorn it. They are the ſweet Oyl which feeds thoſe golden Lamps, thoſe burning and ſhining Lights, which belong unto the Sanctuary of our God: They are as the dew of *Hermon*, which makes fruitful, and long may it do ſo, the Hill of our *Sion*.

That

That which ſome object, of our Saviours chooſing poor ſimple Fiſhermen for the propagation of his Doctrine through the World, being of no validity in this caſe. For though our Saviour choſe out ſuch illiterate Perſons to be his firſt Diſciples, that thoſe extraordinary endowments wherewith He their great Maſter and Teacher furniſh'd them for the execution of their Apoſtolical office might appear to be derived to them by the immediate flowing in of his Spirit upon them, and not convey'd to them by the ordinary and ſlow Channel of the Senſes, thereby to aſtoniſh the Learned Rabbies of that Age, and to make their Incredulity under ſo clear a light, and ſo evident a Demonſtration, the more inexcuſable; yet after he had left them, and in a Miraculous manner conferred the gift of Tongues upon them, to qualifie them for the diſcharge of that Miniſtry which was committed to them, (which by the way ſhews the neceſſity of ſuch gifts for that purpoſe) now they were not only to guide and govern the Church during their own time, but to be Patterns and Examples to all ſucceeding Generations, theſe ſupernatural Illuminations by degrees vaniſhed and diſappeared. Now, the Foundation was not only laid, but a ſuperſtructure raiſed; theſe Scaffolds which were only erected for the more eaſie and ſafe finiſhing of it, were taken

ken down: He therefore, who from this example of our Saviour, will argue for a neceſſity of *Enthuſiaſtick* Inſpirations for the Interpretation of Scripture, may by the ſame Rule maintain, that a Chriſtian Prince with an hundred Men may encounter a Pagan Enemy coming againſt him with Twenty Thouſand, becauſe once by the eſpecial Command of God, *Gideon* reduced his great Army to three hundred, and with them Vanquiſhed the Hoſt of the *Midianites*, which were as the Sand of the Sea for multitude.

We are to Guide and Govern the ſeveral Periods and Circumſtances of our Lives by thoſe ſtated Rules and Meaſures which God in his Infinite Wiſdom hath appointed for us, not to propoſe one or two extraordinary Examples for our Patterns and Imitation. We muſt make uſe of thoſe plain, eaſie, and natural Methods which are laid down before us for the Improvement of our Reaſon, and the Information of our Judgments, not expect that our Underſtanding, which the Wiſe Man calls *The Candle of the Lord*, ſhould be lighted, as the Wood upon his Altar ſometimes was, by an immediate fire from Heaven. And how neceſſary it is for all thoſe who are deſigned to be the Miniſters, and diſpenſers of the Word of God, to apply themſelves betimes to thoſe means which are moſt proper for the attainment of that Knowledge

which

which may prepare them for the through discharge of their Duty, will ſufficiently appear by the great damage the Church hath in all Ages ſuſtained by the Ignorance of fooliſh and unlearned Men. He muſt not pretend to underſtand the Scriptures, or to be converſant in the Style and Language of them, who does not acknowledge that they abound in Tropes, and Figures; in Parables, and dark Speeches; and that there are divers weighty and important verities couch'd under thoſe Allegorical and Enigmatical forms of Speech, which cannot be diſcovered till that Vail and Covering be done away by the Skill and Induſtry of thoſe whoſe Education entides them to that ſort of Learning. What Monſtrous Opinions, what Prodigious Abſurdities, what Pernitious Doctrines hath this want of Art to diſtinguiſh between what is to be taken in a proper and literal, what in a Forein and borrowed ſenſe, begat in the Chriſtian World? To this the Error of the *Millenaries*, which began ſo early, and hath continued ſo long, more or leſs, in the Church, owes its firſt riſe and Original. Unskilful and unwary Men looking no farther than the bare letter of the Text, applying thoſe Glorious and ſpecious Metaphors, under which the Prophets of Old ſhadowed the Spiritual Riches and Happineſs of Chriſts Kingdom, to their down-right

Natural

Natural meaning, made ſuch a Plat-form and Idea of that State as beſt ſuited with their Fancy and Imagination. And how hard a matter it was, even for our Saviour himſelf, the great Teacher of Truth, to wean his own Diſciples from that falſe Opinion they had in the time of their Ignorance ſuck'd in of his Earthly and Temporal Kingdom, the Evangelical Hiſtory does abundantly demonſtrate.

This ſort of Ignorance begat the Follies and idle Dreams of the *Anthropomorphites*, whilſt taking thoſe things which were ſpoken Figuratively in favour to the weakneſs of our ſhallow Underſtandings, concerning the Eſſence of the Inviſible God, in their Natural Capacity, they have repreſented him as a Corporeal, Viſible Subſtance, conſiſting of Humane Members; and even ſuch a one as themſelves. And truly, one would almoſt think, that thoſe of the *Romiſh* Church, who ſtick ſo cloſe to the literal ſenſe of that Sacramental expreſſion, *This is my Body*, had forgotten that our Saviour ever made uſe of any Figures of Speech in the ſeveral Diſcourſes which he made whilſt he was converſant here on Earth. And when their great *Bellarmine* crouds in that Text, *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit*, to Patronize the Order of their *Mendicant* Friers, I ſhould almoſt judge him to be of the ſame Opinion, had we not more Reaſon to believe,

believe, that he and the reſt of them do rather endeavour to bend the Scriptures to their Deſigns, than to accommodate their Deſigns to the Rules of Scripture.

And as the inconveniences are many which have accrued to the Church by the Ignorance and Impudence of thoſe who have preſumed to touch the Myſteries of the Sanctuary with unwaſh'd and unhallowed Hands; ſo on the other ſide, ſhe muſt acknowledge her ſelf to owe the Defence of her Religion, the Propagation of her Faith, and the Confutation of her Adverſaries to the Learned Pens, and the Eloquent Diſcourſes of thoſe Wiſe Maſter-Builders which God raiſed up in all Ages, for her Security and Preſervation. The Ancient Fathers and Writers, who ſpent themſelves and their time to ſerve the Church, not only in their own Age, but to ſucceeding Generations, had loſt much of their aim, and the People of God much of the Benefit was intended them, had their Learned Apologies for the Chriſtian Religion, their Pious Explanations of the ſame Faith, their uſeful Commentaries, their ſtrong and ſolid Arguments layen moulding in Libraries, without a Key to unlock the meaning of them, their Books had long ſince undergone the ſame Fate with themſelves, and become, as they have done, a prey for Moths and Worms. But now

by us, though dead, they yet ſpeak, and become profitable, like the Scriptures of which they treat, for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs. Who, unleſs he attain to the Knowledge of the *Greek* Tongue, by the Advantages of a happy Education, can diſcover the Golden Mines of St. *Chryſoſtom*'s Eloquence? For where is that Excellent, Fluent, Comprehenſive Language Naturally now ſpoken? Even *Greece* her ſelf, once the great Nurſe and Favourer of Arts, that labours as well under the ſad and deplorable Fate of Barbariſm and Ignorance, as the Yoke of *Turkiſh* Slavery, needs the help of acquired Learning to enable her to underſtand the great Maſters of her own *Attick* Elegance. I might Inſtance in the other Famous Language, which, like a Vagabond, hath no certain home; for *Rome* her ſelf hath loſt her Ancient Tongue, as well as her firſt Faith: Both, whatever ſome pretend to ſay in the defence of them, are Corrupted; and her Language as well as Manners in the decay and declination of her Empire, degenerated into a ſoft, and effeminate Delicacy.

Should I purſue this Argument as far as it would go, I might tire both my ſelf and you; but I muſt remember that I told you, that that Learning which is the product of a Liberal Education, was not only, though chiefly neceſſary for

for those who wait at the Altar, but also ſerviceable to all Perſons in thoſe ſeveral ſtations and Profeſſions to which the Divine Providence hath aſſigned them, which was the ſecond Propoſition I laid down.

Setting aſide the Studies of Law and Phyſick, in which none can be ſuppoſed without a good Stock and Bottom of this ſort of Learning to arrive at any Degree of Eminence, either for their own, or others Advantage, I ſhall inſtance in others, whoſe Callings may ſeem to be ſo remote, as not to be capable of receiving any beneficial Influence from thoſe Beams of early Knowledge, wherewith their Infant-underſtandings were at firſt but faintly inlightned.

I am not of the Opinion of thoſe who Argue for the parity and equality of Souls; but this I may be bold to Affirm, That Education, a timely ſeaſoning of the Mind with the ſound and wholſome Principles of Knowledge, hath oftentimes differenced thoſe, who otherwiſe had the ſame intellectual Faculties: And although all Souls have not the ſame Genius and Inclination, nor the ſame Capacity and Comprehenſion, (the Almighty Wiſdom having in ſome meaſure proportioned the gifts of the Mind to the ſeveral Uſes and Ends for which he deſigned the Perſons) yet an Ingenuous Breeding does fit and prepare every one for that

Employment to which his Choice and Inclination leads him: Like the former and the latter Rain it raiſes and quickens thoſe Seeds which before lay dormant and unactive in the ſolid maſs, and gives to every Grain its own Body. 'Tis this that makes Men the eaſier to comprehend the ſeveral Myſteries of their Profeſſion, and to make conſiderable Additions to the ordinary Meaſures and Standards of thoſe Arts which they Profeſs. This puts them upon new Diſcoveries and Improvements, and makes them Eminent in the Sphere wherein they move, and in the place wherein they live. So that the Learned as well as the Righteous Man, becomes more excellent than his Neighbour. Thus Education is the *Elixir* that ripens all ſorts of Metals, and brings them to their due perfection; every thing taking a form ſuitable to that Spirit wherewith it was firſt impregnated: It aſſimilates, and by a Spiritual Alchymy turns all that it hath digeſted, into its own Subſtance, and by its heat and vigour makes that to be Gold, which otherwiſe would have continued an imperfect Mineral. Divers, perhaps, do not conſider that thoſe extraordinary Parts and Abilities of which they are ſometimes Maſters, are the reſult of thoſe Rudiments of Knowledge, which were inſtilled into them in their firſt Years. But yet upon a ſerious recollection they muſt be forced to allow thoſe Improve-

provements to be chiefly the off-ſpring of a good and virtuous Inſtitution; for the faculties of the Mind were thereby enlarged, and capacitated to entertain greater proportions of Knowledge and Wiſdom than they could have received, had they then been un-employed. And although in ſome thoſe Notions, which were, it may be, with great difficulty and reluctancy fixt upon their Minds, do not exert their operations preſently, not being able to extricate themſelves from that viſcous and tenacious matter wherein they were abſorpt; yet after they have conquered their Phlegmatick temper, and wrought themſelves into a clearer Liberty, they muſt acknowledge, whatever other apprehenſions they had in the days of their dulneſs and obſcurity, that their ſeveral accompliſhments are the effect and product of thoſe firſt Characters, which were, though with much labour, imprinted on them. 'Tis to a generous Education likewiſe that the Nobility and Gentry, (of which kind no Foundation can boaſt more, or more deſerving than our own) are indebted for thoſe excellent Qualities which render them not only acceptable to all ingenuous Company, and uſeful to the Common-wealth, but for the happy Comforts of entertaining themſelves at their moſt leiſure, and ſpare hours. It being the ſaying of the Wiſe Lord *Faukland*,

That

That he pitied an unlearned Gentleman in a Rainy Day. Thoſe who by vertue of the Rudiments which were gently infus'd into them in their firſt years, (whoſe tincture, like that of our firſt Notices, can never be waſh'd off) arrive at any competency of Learning, being able upon any emergent accident of their Life, or when either Weather, or their preſent temper does not diſpoſe them to Field-Recreations, to employ their time, not only to their own private ſatisfaction, but for the benefit of the Publick alſo: Whereas the unthinking, and unintelligent Croud are forced upon ſuch occaſions, either to doze away their time in ſleep and idleneſs, or elſe to take up with ſome ungenerous and unmanly Vice for their preſent Divertiſement; thereby compounding for their Ignorance at no leſs a rate than the price of their precious and immortal Souls. And the great *Seneca* tells us to this purpoſe, in his Eighty ſecond Epiſtle, *Otium ſine literis mors eſt, & vivi hominis Sepultura.* Thoſe who have not learnt wiſely to diſpoſe of their moſt vacant Minutes, being buried alive in that groſs and heavy Earth, which they carry about them: And ſurely there is neither Wit, nor Counſel, nor Knowledge, nor Invention in that Grave.

But in vain do I inveigh againſt Ignorance, or commend the general uſefulneſs of Knowledge,

ledge, unleſs I can ſhew you the moſt ready and proper way to eſcape the Follies and Inconveniencies of the one, by attaining the Wiſdom and Advantages of the other, which is that which in the third place I am to ſpeak to, *viz.* That Publick Schools and Seminaries of Learning are the beſt Nurſeries for the training up of Youth in all thoſe parts of Knowledge which may render them Serviceable and Uſeful in their ſeveral Capacities, to the Common-wealth or Society wherein they live.

The firſt publick Seed-plots for Learning amongſt the *Jews* were in, or adjoyning to the Cities of the *Levites*, of which there were ſome in every Tribe, for the greater convenience of Gods Worſhip, and the better Inſtructing of thoſe who were deſigned for the performance of it. Afterwards about *Samuel*'s time, the *Levites* neglecting their Duty of Inſtructing their Charge, and applying themſelves chiefly to the deciding of Controverſies ariſing about the Ceremonial Law, which Trade was gainful to them, and the Prieſthood it ſelf being much degenerated, the Prieſts being both looſe and ignorant, that great Prophet Founded two Societies or Colledges, which were called the Schools of the Prophets for the training up of Young Students in all thoſe Scholaſtical Exerciſes, which might tend to the Improvement of their Natu-

Natural Faculties, and their Advancement in the Rules of Piety and Devotion, thereby to prepare them for the Diſcharge of their Prophetical Office: The number of theſe in proceſs of time was increaſed, and their Foundations enlarged. Thus we read of divers of theſe Publick Schools, at *Bethel*, *Jericho*, *Jordan*, and elſewhere; ſo neceſſary did thoſe great Maſters and Governours of the *Jewiſh* Church think thoſe places of publick Education for the Inſtructing of Youth in all thoſe Sciences, which might diſpoſe them for the more orderly Celebration of Gods Worſhip, and the better Information of his People. And indeed if we rightly conſider the Advantages which great Seminaries have above thoſe Private Corners wherein Youth are ſometimes Inſtituted, we ſhall eaſily grant, that thoſe Ancient Foundations were Built upon a firm Baſis and ground of Reaſon. Such exact Methods of Teaching, ſuch regular Diſcipline, ſuch free and open Communication of Notions, ſuch generous Emulations, as are common and uſual in Publick Schools, cannot be expected in thoſe ſmall and inconſiderable Laboratories, as I may call them, that are ſet up in Countrey Villages.

Indeed it is not every ones good Fortune to go to *Corinth*, or to be brought up at the feet of a *Gamaliel*, but it were to be wiſh'd, that we had more

more Publick Nurſeries, and ſo conveniently Situated, that none of thoſe who are deſigned for the Study of good Letters might want the benefit of a Liberal Education, nor be expoſed to the hazards which divers run by being tampered with in their firſt years, by thoſe little Mountebanks, thoſe Dabblers in Grammar, who, like other Quacks, Kill more than they Cure; who by infuſing their unſound and Sophiſticate Notions into their eaſie and tender Minds, fix ſuch ill habits upon the ſeveral Faculties, as are ſcarce ever to be eradicated by the moſt potent Remedies of a contrary Inſtitution. Like Diſeaſed Nurſes, they Infect thoſe Children they ſhould nouriſh, and by conveying their unwholſome Juices into the empty veins of their Young Pupils, they not only weaken and corrupt the before Healthy Conſtitution of the Soul, but leave ſuch Marks and Characters of their own Imperfections upon them, as are never to be obliterated and worn out. Thoſe raw Beginners, who it may be have made a tranſient Viſit to the Univerſity for Faſhion-ſake, cannot have thoſe Qualifications that are requiſite in thoſe to whom the Government of wild and unbridled Youth ought to be committed. They want that Diſcretion, Prudence, and Moderation, (to ſay no more) which are the moſt commendable Qualities in

thoſe who take that difficult, but withal moſt uſeful Profeſſion upon them. And not being able to Govern their own Paſſions, nor having Judgment to proportion their Corrections to the meaſure of the Fault committed, nor to diſtinguiſh between the ſeveral diſpoſitions of Youth, by their unreaſonable and exorbitant Cruelties, they force their little Flock to take Sanctuary at their own home, or elſe create ſuch an averſion and prejudice againſt all manner of Learning in their Minds which is never to be removed: And indeed what elſe can be expected, when the Young *Orbilius*, who hath ſcarce the ſound of the *Ferula* out of his Ears, nor the ſmart of it out of his Hands, having gotten that wooden Sceptre into his power, begins to Rule Arbitrarily in his little Ædileſhip, and thinks it but juſt to deal with others, as he was ſerved himſelf. Whereas the grave Rector of the Publick School takes his meaſures from the Capacities and Diſpoſitions of thoſe who are under his Care, whoſe Inclinations he knows as well as their Faces, and from thence ſuits his demeanour towards them; he knows how to quicken the Slothful, and to reclaim the Extravagant, by ſhaming them into better Manners, and reduces more to Obedience by Stratagem than by Force. He knows by propoſing little Præmio's to make all ſo run as to ſtrive for the Maſtery,

Maſtery; and by mixing ſome few grains of pleaſure with thoſe uſeful Principles he inſtills into them, he makes his Scholars in love with himſelf and their Books at the ſame time.

But alas, nothing of this Nature is to be expected from the Countrey Chancel, which ſeldom produces any thing fit for the Uſe and Service of the Church. Indeed ſome of us may remember, (and may we never ſee ſuch days again) when divers of the choiceſt of Gods Servants, ſome of the Chief and moſt Eminent Paſtors of our Church, whoſe only Crime was their Loyalty, *were forced for the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, to wander up and down in Deſarts, to hide themſelves in Dens and Caves of the Earth, deſtitute, and Afflicted, of whom our* Engliſh *World was not worthy.* Theſe, I ſay, were glad to Teach Youth in ſome private corner for a mean Livelyhood, to retire into ſome by, unfrequented place to ſhelter themſelves from the Tyranny of thoſe Oppreſſors, which then rid on the Necks of Gods People. Under thoſe ſhades did thoſe great Shepherds feed their Lambs, being driven from their Sheep, in the Noon-day, in the heat and fury of that Perſecution that then raged amongſt us: Amongſt thoſe were many of our Loyal Nobility and Gentry bred, and by their wholſom Doctrines kept ſtedfaſt in the Purity of that Worſhip, and

in thoſe juſt and honeſt Principles for which their Worthy Parents then Suffered, *either by Death, or Baniſhment, or Confiſcation of Goods, or elſe Impriſonment.* But he that will urge this as an Argument for the countenancing of private Schools, may as well make the ſecret Meetings, and Nocturnal Aſſemblies of the Primitive Chriſtians in Dens and Caves, during the heat of Perſecution, an Argument to uphold thoſe unlawful Conventicles which are but too frequent amongſt us at this day. Neither do I Condemn all private places which are made uſe of for the Breeding of Youth, in ſome of which, without queſtion, divers Worthy and Eminent Men have been Educated, who either have met with ſome extraordinary Maſter, or elſe who by the ſtrength of their Natural parts have conquered the Malignity of thoſe ill Principles wherewith they were firſt tainted. But ſtill give me leave, as our Learned Apoſtle St. *Paul* ſays upon another account, to tell you, *That I ſhew unto you a more excellent way.*

And thus having ſhewn you the Uſefulneſs of Humane Learning, as to the ſeveral Occaſions and Emergencies wherein we can be concerned in the World, and the moſt probable way of attaining that Knowledge by an early Education in publick Schools: Suffer me, in the laſt place, that I may conclude my Diſcourſe with ſome-

thing

thing pertinent to the Solemnity of this prefent Day, to offer ſomewhat in behalf of that Royal Foundation of *Eton Colledge*, the Pious and Charitable Work of *Henry* the Sixth, one of the beſt, though moſt unfortunate, of our Princes, at which we received the better part of our Education, and from which divers of us, amongſt whom I my ſelf (which I ſhall ever gratefully acknowledge) though the moſt unworthy, derived other ſecular Advantages. I will not ſay, that though *her Siſters*, of which ſhe hath many, and of great Renown, (but few of the ſame Noble extract with her ſelf) *have all done virtuouſly, that yet ſhe hath excelled them all*: But I think I may affirm that which our Apoſtle does of himſelf, *That ſhe comes not behind the very chiefeſt of them all.*

If Experience, which cannot lye, be a ſure Rule to go by, I have many living Inſtances before me at this time to Witneſs thoſe great and extraordinary Improvements and Accompliſhments which are the reſult and effect of thoſe many hours they carefully ſpent under the happy Tuition of the ſeveral Maſters of that Famous and well Diſciplin'd School; and who do Naturally commend the ſame Education to others, which they found ſo uſeful and beneficial to themſelves. But give me leave to ſhew you likewiſe, how that Royal Society, to which

you

you did once belong, hath all those conveniences which the Wiſeſt and Diſcreeteſt Men have judged to be moſt proper and conducing to that great End for which it was deſigned. The moſt Learned of the *Jewiſh* Writers have given their Opinion, that congruity of place, and ſeparation from the World, were two Circumſtances not to be omitted in the Building of their Schools of the Prophets, in Order to the quicker and eaſier attaining of that Natural Knowledge which might diſpoſe them the ſooner for the gift of Prophecy. By congruity of place, they meant its Situation in a good Air; by the other, a private Retirement from the noiſe and hurry of the World; both very uſeful for the fitting and preparing the Mind for the free Entertaining the Principles and Elements of good Learning. A chearful ſerene Air hath a great Influence upon the temper and complexion of the Body, it puts the Spirits upon a gentle, but active ferment, and thereby renders the whole Craſis and Conſtitution more pliant and ſerviceable to the motions and ſallies of the Soul than otherwiſe it would have been: As Glaſſes are no where made in the ſame perfection for Beauty and Luſtre, as in *Murano*, an Iſland near to *Venice*, which is attributed to the clearneſs of the circumambient Air which hangs over the place, and is continually purified and

atte-

attenuated by the constant fires; so it is observable, that no Wits have been so pure and refined as those who were Bred and Educated in a Healthful and Temperate Clime. And on the contrary, a gross, heavy, thick Air imprisons and chains up the Spirits, and robs them of their elastick Faculty, so that the Soul cannot shew forth her Native brightness, but only put forth some dull and faint glimmerings, whilst she labours under the indisposition of a Body choak'd up and oppress with the impurities of a foul and Corrupted Air.

Retirement also, and Solitude do very much incline the Mind to receive the Characters and Images of Truth and Knowledge into the Sacred Treasury of the unprejudiced Memory, which had it been distracted with variety of Objects, would have been wholly filled, and prepossest with trifling and impertinent Vanities. Hence most of the fore-mentioned Schools of the Prophets were erected not in the Towns, but in the Neighbour-hood of them. Not in the Towns, (I speak with Reverence to the Famous Schools of this great City) in regard the Temptations are so great, and the Avocations so many, amidst the throng and concourse of the Multitude, the Youthful Fancy being apt to be taken with every thing that is gay and new, and so please it self with those little useless

Trifles

Trifles it firſt meets with, to its own prejudice and diſadvantage. In the Neighbour-hood, that ſo the Mind may not be altogether a ſtranger to what paſſes in the World, but have ſome private notices of things and perſons (as ſhe will neceſſarily have, if not purpoſely debarred of that Intelligence) for the Improvement of her Judgment, and the poliſhing her Converſation. Otherwiſe if ſhe be kept ſtill in the dark, and coopt up from the cognizance of the moſt material paſſages that are the common Theme and Subject of the preſent Time, when ſhe comes abroad, ſhe is frighted with the ſudden Light, and her Organs being not well fitted for the reception of thoſe violent impreſſions, which if entertained by degrees, had been eaſily perceptible, ſhe becomes amazed, and ſtartles at that which every common Capacity that hath had a more free and open converſe, underſtands. And this is the Reaſon why divers who have been Cloyſtered up from the Society of Men, and only Converſed with their Books, when they have chanced to appear in the World, have rendred themſelves contemptible, and their Studies unfruitful, it being all one to have no Learning, and not to know how to make a right uſe of it.

And here I cannot but praiſe and commend the Wiſdom of our Pious Founder, in Building

that

that Colledge which he deſigned for the Education and Inſtruction of Youth in ſuch a place, where the pleaſantneſs of the Situation, the temperature of the Air, not ſo ſubtil as to prey upon, yet ſo clear as to refine the Spirits, and its proper diſtance from Town and Court, do inſenſibly inlighten the Faculties of the Soul, and make them more quick and ready to apprehend thoſe excellent Leſſons of Knowledge that are inculcated into them; and indeed it ſeems as if it were contrived on purpoſe for the Head-Manſion-Seat of the Muſes, who have long dwelt in thoſe delightful ſhades, and I hope will never, through the levelling deſigns of thoſe who would root up the Church, the Government, and Learning, the Supporter of them both, (as was once intended) be forced to forſake their Ancient Habitation. This is our *Nayoth*, which, as *Peter Martyr* tells us, ſignifies Green Paſture, Situate by thoſe pleaſant Meadows and gentle Streams, which enliven the Fancy, and quicken and exalt the Imagination. This is the Palace which *Wiſdom built for her ſelf*, ſetting it upon thoſe *ſeven hewen Pillars*, the ſeven Liberal Sciences, whoſe Foundation can never fail. This is the place, that I may with the addition of a word allude as our Learned Apoſtle, St. *Paul*, does in another caſe, *to one of your own Poets*, to your old

School-fellow, and Companion to one that will never leave your Society as long as Learning is encouraged, to your beloved *Homer*. Γνώσεως ἐξ οὗ καὶ πάντες ποταμοὶ, καὶ ῥεῖαθα πάντα ναίει: for which Quotation, not well to be omitted, I hope I shall easily obtain a Pardon from this Learned Auditory, being assured that should I have occasion, which I shall rather avoid than seek, of making use of any more of the same Nature, that I shall not incur our Apostles displeasure, in speaking to you *in an unknown Tongue*. And now, before I take my leave of you, suffer me, most worthy School-fellows and Companions, to apply my self to you in a few words, and I shall cease to be further troublesome to you at this time.

You were all, my dear Brethren, planted at first in the same Pleasant and Fruitful Soyl, had the same or the like cultivating, and Manuring, and drunk in the same sweet dews of Knowledge which distilled from the lips of those who were the Teachers and Governours of your Youth: And all of you in your due seasons transplanted from that Nursery into larger Gardens of different Moulds and goodness one from another, but all sufficient by virtue of that Original tincture you had imbibed there, to enable you to bring forth in great abundance the proper fruits of your several Callings and Professions. I need not desire you, I know your own Ingenuity, and

and generous Inclinations lead you to behave your ſelves ſo in your ſeveral Poſts and Stations, as that you may neither derogate from the place of your Education, nor the Credit of your Profeſſions, but prove rather, what I have great Reaſon to believe you are, Ornaments to both. You have received largely at the hands of God, it will, and ought to be expected that you make ſuitable returns. *And though*, as our great Apoſtle ſays in another ſenſe, *when you were Children, you ſpake, and thought, and underſtood, and acted as Children*; yet remember that now you write Men, and ſuch too, as by virtue of your ingenuous Education, have had greater Advantages than many others of improving your Reaſon and Underſtanding. Wherefore *forgetting what is behind, reach forward towards that which is before you*, that you may prove as Eminent in your ſeveral ways, as the Nature and Quality of your Employment will bear. To ſhut up all, *Let your Garments*, as the Preacher Adviſes, *Eccleſ. 9.* v. 8. *be white, and let your Heads*, upon this Solemn Feſtival, *lack no Oyntment*; and carry along with you a chearful Countenance, and all the civil marks and ſignatures of an Innocent and inoffenſive joy, to the place whither you are going.

Innocence and true Mirth are near Allyed, and it is pity they ſhould ever be aſunder. 'Tis

a good Conſcience, a welcome Remembrance, that you have in ſome meaſure anſwered the Ends of your Liberal Inſtitution at that Royal Foundation where you were Bred, which will be the beſt reliſh, and give the higheſt taſte not only to your publick Entertainment this day, but be a continual Feaſt to you afterwards. And let us all, it being a Duty which my Text, and our own Obligations require of us, retain a Venerable Eſteem for thoſe Wiſe, Learned, and Good Men, who were the careful and painful Inſtructors of our Youth, who brought us from Darkneſs unto Light; who by bearing with our Infirmities, complying with our ſeveral Diſpoſitions, informing our Judgments, and filling up the Blanks and empty ſpaces of our Souls, diſtinguiſh'd us from the Common Herd, *who being void of Knowledge, are like the Beaſts that periſh.* Let us likewiſe praiſe the Lord for thoſe Excellent Kings and Queens whom he raiſed in ſeveral Ages to be the Nurſing-Fathers, and the Nurſing-Mothers of his Church, eſpecially let us return our hearty and unfeigned Thanks unto Almighty God, for putting thoſe good Thoughts into the Heart of our Religious Founder, *Henry* the Sixth, of Bleſſed Memory, to erect that Famous Seminary and Nurſery of good Learning, *Eton Colledge*, our Common and Indulgent Mother, from whoſe full and

over-

overflowing Breasts we suck'd that wholsome and kindly Nourishment, which hath added to the stature of our Knowledge, and increased the growth of our Understanding.

Finally, seeing *Et spes, & ratio studiorum in Cæsare*; Seeing we enjoy not only the Freedom, but the Benefits and Advantages of our Studies by the Protection, and under the Peaceable and Auspicious Government of our Gracious Sovereign, *Charles* the Second, who is not only the Promoter and Encourager of all Ingenious Learning, but a great Master of all those useful Arts and Sciences which are worthy a Prince's knowledge: And seeing he vouchsafes to own us in a particular manner as his own, and to Grace this our Meeting with peculiar Marks of his Royal Favour, let us all unanimously, as our Duty and Allegiance binds us, pray for the long and Prosperous Reign of His Most Sacred Majesty, and that there may be still a continued Succession of Princes from that Ancient Stock to Rule these Nations in Peace and Quietness till the Dissolution of all Humane Authority; and that they may continue to be still Defenders of the true Primitive Faith, till Faith it self be no more, and the Church which is now Militant become Triumphant. And I hope in putting up this *Address* to the Throne of Grace, I shall meet

meet with no *Diſſenters* in this Congregation. Let all the Lucky Signs of a favourable Providence attend his Sacred Perſon; Let the Sun offer him his Beams, the Earth her Fruits, and all his Subjects their Loyal Hearts. Let the Poor Bleſs him, and his very Enemies be forced to praiſe him. Let Peace remain in his Dwellings, and Integrity dwell in his Boſom: Let true Religion and the welfare of the Church be ever dear unto him; Let all his Laws and Commands be duly Executed, and Religiouſly Obſerved. Let Wiſdom be the Supporter of his Throne, and let her carry for him, as ſhe uſually does, *in her Right Hand length of Days, and in her left Hand Riches and Honour.* Let Patience (a Virtue he hath but too much occaſion to make uſe of) poſſeſs his Royal Heart; Let Majeſty ſit ſtill upon his Brow, and yet Mercy continue to couch between his Eye-lids. Let the Angels of God be his Guardians, and his particular Providence his Shield of Defence. Let the many Headed *Hydra* that hiſſes and ſpits its Venom in Libels and Pamphlets againſt the Government, be deſtroyed, and thoſe that ſpeak evil of Dignities, receive their juſt Reward; and let him trample all Rebellion and Conſpiracies, wherever they be, under his Feet: And after a long and happy Reign, let the Glorious Spirits, thoſe Winged Chariots of God, convey him to that Bleſſed

place

place of Reſt that is prepared for all true Believers.

Where may all his Loyal Subjects who *fear God, and Honour their King*, meet him, and amongſt them we who are met together this Day.

And that for the ſake, and through the Merits of our Bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer, *Jeſus Chriſt*, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Three Perſons, and One God, be all Honour, Praiſe, and Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.